

National Park Service

Santa Monica Mountains

National Recreation Area



CHEESEBORO/PALO COMADO CANYONS



elcome to the northernmost section of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Here, in the Simi Hills, the waters that flow in Cheeseboro and Palo Comado Canyons begin their journey to the Pacific. In this large expanse of habitat, deer, bobcats, coyotes and rabbits roam. Stroll to Sulphur Springs or hike to the top of Simi Peak and view the cities you've left behind. Walk quietly amid the oaks and grasses or picnic beside a streambed.

The Chumash lived in these canyons for thousands of years. Many trails within the canyons may have originated with the Chumash and then were expanded by the ranchers who followed.

For more than 150 years, ranchers made these canyons their home, bringing about a change in the landscape. Many of the native plants, poorly adapted to heavy grazing, were replaced with European annuals such as wild oats, mustard and thistles. Native plants were not the only things to be affected. Grizzly bears, once thriving in the canyons, were exterminated by the ranchers.

Today, a great diversity of plants and animals live in the canyons. Widespread oaks and outcrops of sedimentary rock provide excellent nesting sites for owls, hawks and other raptors (birds of prey). The abundance of raptors indicates a large prey population, especially small mammals and reptiles. In more rugged areas where cattle didn't graze, we can still find a variety of native plant communities, including chaparral, coastal sage scrub and riparian woodlands.

With the removal of cattle, the landscape is allowed to renew itself. Oak seedlings can now grow tall without becoming food for cattle. Native annual wildflowers are returning, dotting the landscape with colorful displays in the springtime.

Enjoy your visit to Cheeseboro/Palo Comado Canyons and explore the splendors this area has to offer.



National Park Service
Santa Monica Mountains
National Recreation Area
401 West Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks CA 91360

Visitor Center 805-370-2301
In emergency: dial 911

Information & Safety

Be prepared: take water, food, flashlights and first-aid supplies when hiking, biking or horseback riding. Watch for and avoid rattlesnakes and poison oak.

Water from streams is not safe to drink due to possible contamination or the presence of the giardia protozoan.

Dogs must be on leash at all times. They are allowed only on trails and access roads.

Trail closures will be in effect during and following significant rainfall to protect park resources. Trails will be re-opened when dry enough to sustain public use.

Fire is a constant danger. Fires and barbeques are prohibited. Smoking is not permitted while traveling on trails.

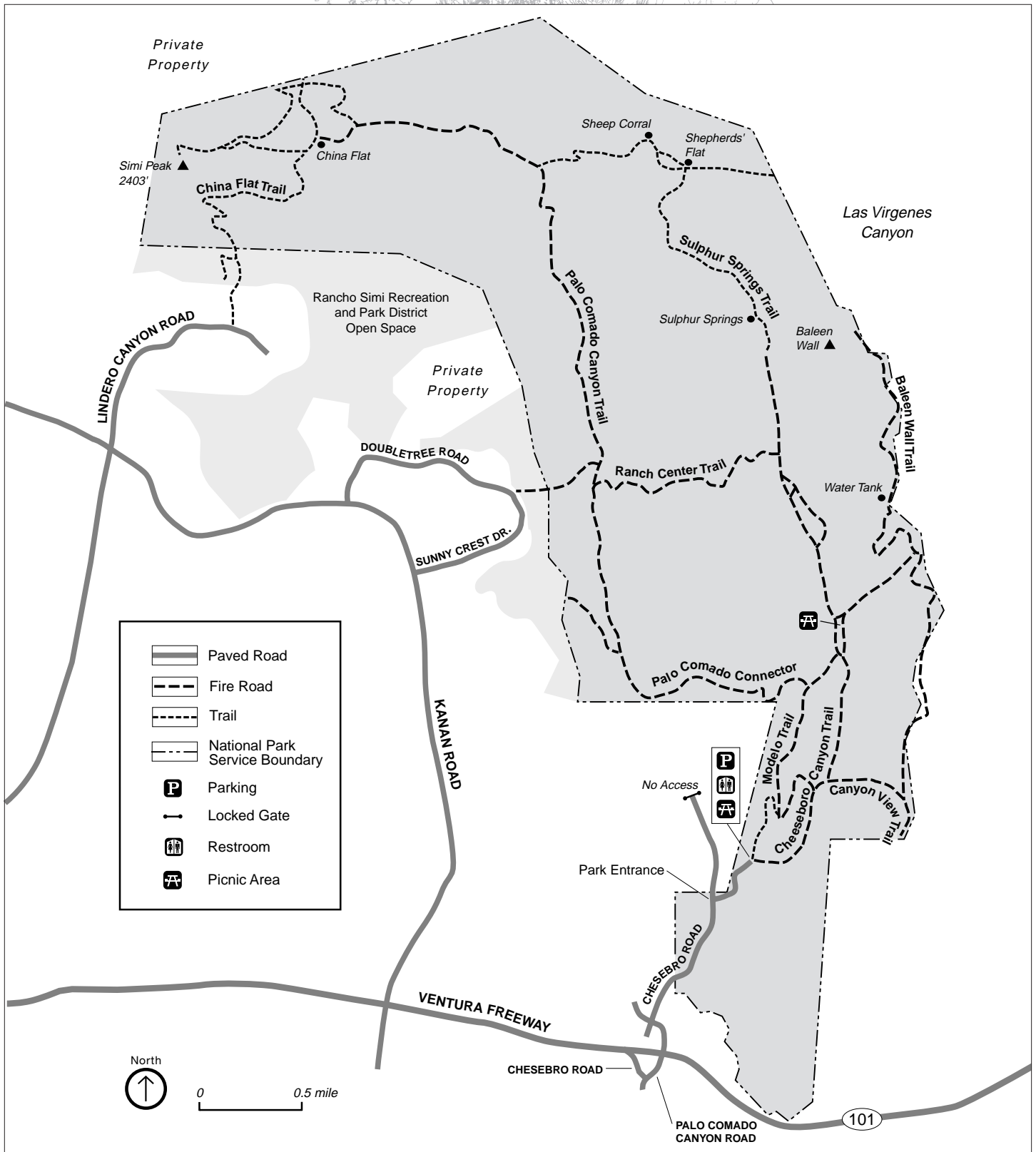
Natural and historic features are protected by law and may not be collected.

Bicyclists must ride courteously and yield to hikers and horseback riders. Bicycles are allowed only on fire roads and designated trails. Speed limit is 15 mph. Bicycles are required to have lights when riding at night.

Hikers must yield to horseback riders.

Firearms are not allowed in parklands.

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Trails

Modelo Spur 0.7 mile, moderate—This trail meanders from the parking lot through grasslands to a lone coast live oak on the ridge. The trail drops east and joins the Cheeseboro Canyon Trail.

Modelo Trail 1 mile, easy—Starting at the ridge line of the Modelo Spur and continuing north along the ridge, this pathway offers views of both canyons. It ends at the Palo Comado Connector Trail where you can turn right, and travel east to Cheeseboro Canyon, or left, and travel west to Palo Comado Canyon.

Palo Comado Canyon Trail 4.4 miles, moderate to strenuous—The first 1.2 miles of this trail is a gentle stroll along a creek to the old ranch center. The dramatic elevation gain begins a mile past the ranch site where you will climb from 1,200 feet elevation to scenic China Flat at 2,140 feet elevation.

Palo Comado Connector 1.5 miles, moderate—Travel this old ranch road across the ridge and through a section of Modelo Shale to reach either Cheeseboro or Palo Comado Canyons.

Cheeseboro Canyon Trail / Sulphur Springs Trail 4.6 miles, easy—Follow an old ranch road along a streambed through a valley oak savannah and coast live oak riparian zone. A picnic area is located 1.6 miles from the parking lot. Near Sulphur Springs, at 3.3 miles, you can smell the odor of rotten eggs. As you pass under the Baleen Wall, the canyon opens up and chaparral slopes replace the savannah. The trail continues to an old sheep corral where you can picnic near the creek bed or watch the sky for birds of prey.

Canyon View Trail 0.7 mile, moderately strenuous—This trail splits to the east of the Cheeseboro Canyon Trail and climbs to a knoll above the Lost Hills landfill.

Looking back towards the west, you can see most of Cheeseboro Canyon.

Ranch Center Trail 1.1 miles, moderate to strenuous—This trail crosses a chaparral hillside and connects Cheeseboro and Palo Comado Canyons.

Simi Peak Trail 0.8 mile, moderate—This trail winds from China Flat to Simi Peak, the highest point in the area. Enjoy a spectacular view of Oak Park, Agoura Hills and Simi Valley.

Baleen Wall Trail 2 miles, moderate to strenuous—Begin 1.25 miles up the Cheeseboro Canyon Trail to an uphill climb towards a large water tank. Follow the fire road north along a ridge for great views of the canyon below.